

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 HA-02 NSC-05 INR-05 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 IO-06 SP-02 CA-01 VO-01 H-01 /044 W
-----123576 130938Z /23

P R 130835Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6308
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 7075

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, MY
SUBJECT: VISIT TO MALAYSA-HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY STAFFERS
CLINE AND ENDRES

REF: 77 KUALA LUMPUR 8763

1. SUMMARY: IN EXTREMELY EARNEST PRESENTATION OF MALAYSIAN
VIEWS ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEE SITUATION, SECRETARY NATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL STATED GOM HEIGHTENED CONCERN THAT PROBLEM
IS GETTING OUT OF CONTROL. CITING DISPARITY OF 9,213 IN BOAT
REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN MALAYSIA OVER DEPARTURES FROM MALAYSIA,
JULY 77 THROUGH JUNE 78, SECRETARY MADE FRANK APPEAL TO
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JIDICIARY STAFFERS CLINE AND ENDRES
THAT USG TAKE ACTION TO PUT ARRIVAL:DEPARTURE RAITO BACK
INTO BALANCE. RESPONDING TO GOM APPEAL, STAFFERS NOTED
THEIR TRIP AROUND REGION MOST INFORMATIVE AND STATED THAT
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BASED ON HUMANITARIAN APPROACH, THEY WOULD RECOMMEND THAT
COMMITTEE BE MORE LIBERAL IN ITS APPROVAL OF MEANS TO
RESTORE EQUILIBRIUM TO BOAT REFUGEE PROBLEM IN SOUTHEAST
ASIA. END SUMMARY.

2. ON THE AFTERNOON OF TUESDAY, JULY 11, 1978, HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY STAFFERS GARNER CLINE AND ARTHUR

ENDRES MET WITH SECRETARY OF THE MALAYSIAN SECURITY COUNCIL TO DISCUSS FOM VIEWS ON INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEE PROBLEM. IN A BRISK AND CANDID EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, STAFFERS WERE FIRST BRIEFED ON CURRENT SITUATION IN MALAYSIA FROM GOM PERSPECTIVE.

3. STATING THAT HARSH GOM POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS MADE IN NOVEMBER OF 1977 (REFTEL) WERE PRIMARILY FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION, SECRETARY GOM/NSC SAID THAT MALAYSIA CONTINUES TO GRANT TEMPORARY ASYLUM TO INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEES. HE NOTED WITH FRANK APPREHENSION, HOWEVER THAT DISPARITY OF REFUGEE ARRIVALS OVER DEPARTURES HAS GROWN BY MORE THAN 9,000 OVER PAST 12 MONTHS.

4. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING WITH THANKS US/AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO MOVE REFUGEES FROM MALAYSIA, SECRETARY NOTED HEIGHTENED DISPLEASURE IN (CONSERVATIVE, MUSLIM, AND POOR) CONSTITUENCIES EAST COAST MALAYSIA AT HAVING OVER 10,000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THEIR MIDST. POLITICAL PRESSURES ON CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO TAKE MEASURES TO DEAL WITH SITUATION WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY STRIDENT. HE SAID THAT WHILE GOM HAD TRIED TO MOLLIFY DEMANDS FOR ACTION IN PAST, FACTS NOW SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. THE PEOPLE KNOW, HE SAID, THAT ARRIVALS HAVE GREATLY EXCEEDED DEPARTURES (BY MORE THAN 1,500 PER MONTH) ESPECIALLY OVER PAST FOUR MONTHS. SECRETARY POINTED OUT HUMANE
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GOM ASYLUM PRACTICES NOW INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN AND MADE PLEA THAT USG TAKE ACTION TO RESTORE BALANCE TO SITUATION.

5. CLINE THANKED GOM FOR ITS HUMANITARIAN ASYLUM POLICY AND ASKED IF IT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE IMPLEMENTED. IN RESPONSE, SECRETARY REITERATED THAT AT PRESENT RATE OF ARRIVALS, THERE WOULD BE MORE THAN 20,000 BOAT REFUGEES IN MALAYSIA BY END OF YEAR. HE SAID THERE WERE NO UNPOPULATED ISLANDS AVAILABLE WHERE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES COULD BE KEPT FROM PULIC ATTENTION AND EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT GOM COULD CONTINUE TO MEET BASIC NEEDS OF BOAT REFUGEES GIVEN WEIGHT OF PROBLEM. (COMMENT: GOM IS GIVING CONSIDERATION TO MOVING 6,000 REFUGEES FROM TRENGGANU TO LAST REMAINING UNPOPULATED ISLAND OFF EAST COAST MALAYSIA).

6. BROACHING SUBJECT OF 90,000 FILIPINO REFUGEES NOW IN EAST MALAYSIA, ENDRES PROBED GOM OFFICIALS AS TO VIEWS ON THAT SITUATION. SECRETARY REPLIED THAT FILIPINOS MORE ASSIMILABLE AND THAT WITH REFUGEE SELF-HELP AND ASSISTANCE FROM UNHCR, GOM WAS COPING WITH PROBLEM.

HELP, HE SAID, WAS NEEDED WITH REGARD TO VIETNAMESE
REFUGEE DILEMMA.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 7075

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7. SECRETARY SAID THAT IDEALLY, SITUATION SHOULD BE
RESTORED TO THAT OF NOVEMBER 1977, WHEREIN ABOUT 4,000
INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEES WERE IN TEMPORARY ASYLUM
IN MALAYSIA. NOTING THIS TO BE MANAGEABLE FIGURE,
SECRETARY AGAIN ASKED STAFFERS TO CARRY HOME APPEAL
THAT USG TAKE ACTION TO ALLEVIATE PROBLEM OF GROWING
IN-CAMP REFUGEE CENSUS.

8. POSING QUESTION AS TO SPECIFIC ACTIONS, ENDRES
ASKED WHAT US COULD DO. SECRETARY REPLIED THAT US
COULD ASK HANOI TO STOP REFUGEES FROM LEAVING VIETNAM.
SUGGESTION WAS NOT PURSUED BEYOND SPECULATION AS TO WHETHER
SRV SECURITY FORCES WERE EVEN CAPABLE OF STEMMING
FLOW SHOULD IT INCREASE EFFORTS TO DO SO.

9. ENDRES THEN SUGGESTED THAT INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEE
PROBLEM BE APPROACHED WITHIN CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL
FORUM WHEREIN MALAYSIA COULD PRESENT MATTER IN HOPES
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OF GREATER INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO, AND RELIEF OF, PLIGHT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. SECRETARY REPLIED THAT SUCH WAS MATTER FOR REVIEW BY GOM FOREIGN MINISTRY. CLINE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT FORUM MIGHT SERVE TO DISTRIBUTE BURDEN OF PROBLEM TO ALL NATIONS CONCERNED AND NOT JUST UPON THOSE MOST IMMEDIATELY INVOLVED.

10. CLINE NOTED THAT PROBLEM OF INDOCHINESE RESETTLEMENT SHOULD BE POSED TO US PUBLIC AS HUMANITARIAN APPEAL AND NOT IN CONTEXT OF CONTINUING OBLIGATION TO OUR FORMER CO-COMBATANTS. HE SAID THAT PROPOSAL FOR CONTINUED ADMISSIONS OF BOAT REFUGEES, SO BASED, SHOULD BE DRAFTED BY STATE, IN COMPREHENSIVE FORM FOR SUBMISSION TO US CONGRESS. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD SUGGEST TO CONGRESS A LIBERALIZATION OF US ADMISSION ATTITUDE IN ORDER TO RESTORE BALANCE TO ARRIVAL:DEPARTURE RATIO OF INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEE GIVEN ASYLUM IN REGIN.

11. COMMENT: MEETING ENDED ON THIS CORDIAL NOTE, WHICH PRESUMABLY SHOULD BE SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGING TO MALAYSIANS. NSC SECRETARY'S REMARKS, WHIL PERHAPS SLIGHTLY OVERSTATED FOR STAFFERS'S BENFIT, NEVERTHELESS REFLECT REAL GOM CONCERN OVER THE RAPIDLY GROWING REFUGEE PRESENCE HERE. POLITICAL PRESSURES NOTED PARA 4 ABOVE MAY BE EASED SLIGHTLY BY VIRTUAL COMPLETION OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS LAST WEEKEND AND GOVERNMENTS'S RESOUNDING VICTORY THERIN OVER ITS RADICAL MUSLIM OPPONENTS. HOWEVER, THE PRESSURES ARE STILL THERE AND BOUND TO GROW AGAIN AS THE REFUGEE POPULATION CONTINUES TO MOUNT.

12. STAFFERS INDICATED THAT TOUR AROUND REFUGEE CAMPS HAD BEEN AN EYEOPENER, ONE IN WHICH THEY SAW FOR THEMSELVES
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PLIGHT OF REFUGEES AND PRESSURES ON MALAYSIAN AND THAI GOVERNMENTS. END COMMENT.
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